



By fall the pups are approaching adult size. They are strong enough to travel longer distances, and they can keep up with the other pack members. In the autumn, the focus of the adult wolves shifts from protection and nurturing of the young to the survival of the pack. Pups who are not strong enough to travel may be left behind to hunt and survive alone.

Hunting strategy depends upon the region and the size of the prey. Because red wolves depend for food on smaller prey than gray wolves, they tend to be more solitary, often hunting alone or in pairs. Food is usually difficult to obtain. Wolves are skilled hunters, but more often, it is the prey that succeeds in getting away. Wolves will eat as often as they are successful in the hunt. If there is more meat than they can consume in one feeding, they may cache the remainder by burying it just as a dog buries a bone.

A wolf pack lives and hunts in an established territory which must contain enough prey to sustain all the pack members. Wolves, therefore, defend their territories against the intrusion of outsiders. Pack members scent mark their territories by urinating on trees or rocks, and they will often announce their presence by howling. Wolf territories often overlap, and many biologists believe that there are buffer zones at the edges of established territories. Wolves that have dispersed from their natal, or birth, packs, may stay in buffer zones at the fringes of established territories in order to keep from being injured or killed by resident packs.



VOCABULARY

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| 1. hunt | 6. scent mark |
| 2. red wolf | 7. biologist |
| 3. gray wolf | 8. buffer zone |
| 4. cache | 9. disperse |
| 5. territory | 10. resident pack |